



Research Paper

NURSING INTERNSHIP STUDENT'S PERCEPTION REGARDING ROLE OF PRECEPTOR IN ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES AT A PRIVATE SECTOR HOSPITAL

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Abstract

Internship period is a requisite year for the training of newly graduates to fill the gap between theory and practice. Internship period provide opportunity to the nursing students to enhance their skills and use their knowledge in various clinical procedures and practices. It is a transitional period during which the clinical skills of nursing student refined and professionally became mature enough to accomplish the role and responsibilities must require for becoming a licensure nurse. The role of preceptor or mentor is very important for the successful completion of internship period which help the students to become a competent clinical nurse. The clinical preceptor helps the internship students by providing different and enhanced their learning by clinical demonstration of various nursing procedures on real patients. The study design was cross sectional descriptive and conducted in different wards of the private sector hospital where internship students assigned for their internship period. The sample size is 80 student nurses and this convenience sample internship nursing students who are graduated from College of Nursing, Private hospital through the academic year 2018-2019 was chosen because they have finished phase one and two of the internship period. Majority of the study participant's responses fall in the range of 70 to 80 percent indicating strongly agree or agree response with the role of preceptor in attaining the nursing students learning outcomes during internship period for the better quality care provision. Nursing students showed agreement (82.8%) with the statement "Work effectively with interdisciplinary team in order to meet the healthcare needs of patients and their families". Moreover, majority of the nurses (85%) showed positive response to "Assume responsibility and accountability for own decisions and actions etc. Overall, it is concluded that participated internship nursing students held a positive perception towards preceptor role in achieving learning outcome at clinical site for the better provision of quality care services. The findings of present study depict that student nurses during internship perceived the role of preceptor as valuable asset

for learning at clinical site that improve the competencies to perform different practical procedures in professional way and minimize the gap between theory and practice. Clinical preceptors help the interns to perform physical assessment comprehensively for better diagnosis of patient health problem.

Key words: Student Nurses, Perception, Preceptor, Learning Outcomes etc.

INTRODUCTION

Internship period is a requisite year for the training of newly graduates to fill the gap between theory and practice. It is a period during which student nurses apply their concepts learned in the classroom for the betterment of the patients at clinical setting. Internship period provide opportunity to the nursing students to enhance their skills and use their knowledge in various clinical procedures and practices (Omer et al. 2016). It is a transitional period during which the clinical skills of nursing student refined and professionally became mature enough to accomplish the role and responsibilities must require for becoming a licensure nurse. The role of preceptor or mentor is very important for the successful completion of internship period which help the students to become a competent clinical nurse (Duchsher 2010).

The clinical preceptor helps the internship students by providing different skills related to their successful clinical practice and enhanced their learning by clinical demonstration of various nursing procedures on real patients. This will help the novel nurses to move into advanced learner stage and enable them to exhibit proficient clinical skills in real situations especially in critical care units (Al-Mahmoud et al. 2013).

Clinical learning is the process of acquisition of essential skills for the quality care provision to patients at clinical setting. It is an effective way of learning during which new student nurses equipped to achieve clinical competence in performing different practices (Kaphagawani and Useh 2013). In all nursing colleges, pre service training sessions are essential for the application of theoretical knowledge into practice. At clinical setting the concept of preceptorship is not new and essential for application of theory into practice by novel nursing student. The role of preceptor is to guide the clinical students at every step to perform the clinical procedures with competency (Hall 2016).

The clinical preceptors recognize and integrate the theoretical concepts related to core nursing interventions and skills to nursing practice. The nurse as a preceptor facilitate the learning of the student nurses at clinical setting through hands on practice

on real patients. The preceptor must direct the internship students and teach them different practical skills to enhance their expertise, morale and confidence (Leslee 2014).

The role of preceptor is not limited to a teacher or facilitator in achieving the learning objectives at clinical site. Preceptor is one who develop one to one relationship with internship students and act as a protector of newly graduate nurse, leader, change agent, evaluator, and role model to influence the students to fill the gap between theory and practice (Weselby 2014). The role of preceptor is to help the student nurses to evaluate patients in a systematic manner by keeping in the view standards of nursing practice.

Moreover, preceptor help the student nurses to use various nursing frameworks for planning patient and family centered holistic care plans and use evidences provided by research to guide differences practices of nurses. Preceptor help the internship students to make informed decision regarding quality care by the use of critical thinking skills (Aboshaiqah & Qasim, 2018; Esteves, Cunha, Bohomol, & Santos, 2019; Glynn & Silva, 2013).

Meanwhile, preceptor help in the recognition of structure and services available at practice setting for better provision of patient care. Preceptor teach the internship students to work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams to fulfill the health related needs of patients and families. Furthermore, role of preceptor is to assist the interns to develop psychomotor skills for the achievement of learning outcomes devised by their parent institutes (Cunha, Bohomol, & Santos, 2019; Glynn & Silva, 2013). The internship nursing students acquire and integrate the ethical and legal professional values into nursing practices. All these practices by preceptor make a competent nurse practitioner with high morale, positive attitude, and leadership qualities best for care provision according to international standards (Dimitriadou et al. 2015)

The clinical preceptors enable the internship nursing students to use verbal and nonverbal clues for effective therapeutic communication with interdisciplinary teams and patients as well. At clinical placement, the important task is to maintain the record and documentation of essential nursing intervention and nursing care plans effectively for evidences at legal and professional level. Clinical preceptors help the interns to perform physical assessment comprehensively for better diagnosis of patient health

problem (Al-Mamari, Al-Nasseri, & Al-Maskari, 2014; Bradshaw, Tighe, & Doody, 2018; Carver & Lazarsfeld-Jensen, 2018).

Moreover, nursing internship students demonstrate nursing skills as required by their curriculum related to internship with the help of preceptor. The interns became vigilant in assigning the work load and provision of holistic nursing care according to standard guidelines during internship period. They demonstrate the clinical competencies effectively with the help of clinical preceptors (Al-Mamari et al., 2014)

To understand the extent of students' competencies, skills and data that one has uninherited throughout the session of coaching, the descriptive learning outcomes that students are judged supported why that data and skills are helpful to them. Learning outcomes center on the framework and prospective applications of uninherited data and skills, facilitate them to attach learning in numerous contexts and facilitate in assessment and analysis processes (Atakro and Gross 2016). Moreover, an intended learning outcome addresses student performance and describes what students should be able to know or to do at the end of the course that they could not prior to it (Karen and Janis 2015).

With technological advances, the nursing internship students successively need to pass a prosperous and productive internship period to gain knowledge and dominant clinical experience, obtain effective therapeutic communication skills and leadership and managerial ability to achieve the learning outcome of the internship period. Majority of the hospitals all over the world have preceptors with clear roles and responsibilities, still little research has been published about the perception of nursing interns regarding their satisfaction with the role of the preceptor in achieving learning outcomes of the internship period.

OBJECTIVE

1. To assess the perception of internship nursing students about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes at private sector hospital.
2. To explore the perception of internship nursing students about the role of preceptors in improving their administrative/leadership role, psychomotor skills and to enhance their critical thinking and cognitive skills

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Perception

It is the way of thinking of nursing internship students towards the role of preceptor in the achievement of learning outcome. The responses of the nursing student internship were categorized on a 5-point Likert scale with 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (undecided) 2 (dis disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree).

Role of preceptor

The role of the preceptor is to facilitate learning by assisting the student to meet personal and course objectives and achieve learning outcomes.

Learning outcome

The knowledge, skills and abilities internship nursing students should possess and can demonstrate upon completion of internship.

HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis

- There is no difference in perception of internship nursing students about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes at private sector hospital.

Alternative Hypothesis

- There is a difference in perception of internship nursing students about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes at private sector hospital.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The clinical preceptors recognize and integrate the theoretical concepts related to core nursing interventions and skills to nursing practice. The nurse as a preceptor facilitate the learning of the student nurses at clinical setting through hands on practice on real patients. The preceptor must direct the internship students and teach them different practical skills to enhance their expertise, morale and confidence. The role of preceptor is not limited to a teacher or facilitator in achieving the learning objectives at clinical site. Preceptor is one who develop one to one relationship with internship students and act as a protector of newly graduate nurse, leader, change agent, evaluator, and role model to influence the students to fill the gap between theory and practice. The role of preceptor is to help the student nurses to evaluate patients in a systematic manner by keeping in the view standards of nursing practice.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design: The study design was cross sectional descriptive in nature.

Settings: This study was conducted in different wards of the private sector hospital where internship students assigned for their internship period.

Sample Size: The sample size of 80 cases is calculated with 95% confidence Interval, 8% margin of error and expected percentage of difference of learning outcome as 18% (after adding 20% of dropout rate the sample size is n=80

Formula:
$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot 1 - \frac{\alpha}{2} \cdot P(1-P)}{d^2}$$

This convenience sample of 80 internship nursing students who are graduated from College of

Nursing, Private hospital through the academic year 2018-2019 were be chosen because they have finished phase one and two of the internship period.

Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling technique was used to obtained sample size of this study.

Inclusion Criteria

- Nursing internship students who were willing and agreed to participate in the study
- Who has finished both phases one and two of the intern period and had graduated through the academic year 2018-2019 from the college of nursing, private sector hospital.

Exclusion Criteria

- Nursing internship students from previous academic years or different universities were excluded
- Those students who did not finish the different phases of the internship period field were excluded from the study

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Firstly, students were informed about the purpose and objective of the study. The researcher handed over the questionnaire with consent form to the ward manager of each department for the enhancement of response rate. Participants were informed about the voluntary participation, right of withdraw at any stage of data collection and their identity should have kept confidential. Nursing internship students were asked to give consent if they were agreed to participant in this study. The questionnaire was applied once to each student immediately when they finished the intern period and collected two days later to give them time to complete the questionnaire in their free time. The conveniently selected internship students were invited to fill the questionnaire sheet comprising of 2 sections, demographics of study participant section and perception of internship nursing students regarding the preceptor role in achieving

learning outcomes. This whole procedure takes maximum 20 minutes of the study participants.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

A self-administered questionnaire was used to achieve the objectives of the study. It consisted on two sections likely demographics of study participant section and perception of internship nursing students regarding the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes.

Section-I: Socio-demographic variables, which include gender, age, marital status, qualification, and grade point average (GPA).

Section-II: This section consisted on 27 items questionnaire of perception of internship nursing students regarding the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes of clinical setting adopted from published article. The perception questionnaire contained total 27 anticipated learning outcomes of internship period out of which 23 questions were developed by the College of Nursing's faculty, KSAU, Jeddah, ([http:// conj.ksau-hs.edu.sa/index.php/intended-learning-outcomes-of-Internship-field-experience](http://conj.ksau-hs.edu.sa/index.php/intended-learning-outcomes-of-Internship-field-experience)) and remaining 4 question about learning outcomes had been added by the researcher of the article (Murshid, 2020) (that is, recognise informed career decision, perform progressive development and broadening of clinical skills, carry out nursing care needs of a full patient load in the day, night and over the weekend, and demonstrate effectively all required clinical competencies).

The perception of internship nursing students regarding the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes was measured by five item scale. The 5-point Likert scale ranked as 1-5 (1= strongly agree 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=dis-disagree and 5= strongly disagree). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.76$). For the reliability of the instrument a pilot study was conducted with four students.

RELIABILITY OF THE TOOL: Reliability of tools is already tested where the perception of nursing internship students regarding the role of a preceptor in achieving learning outcomes tool have reliability 0.76.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The aim of the present study is to assess the perception of internship nursing students regarding the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes. Participants were informed about the purpose of study and their identity should have kept confidential. The research should have examined the questionnaire for completeness of response and

carefully assign code to each of the questionnaire. The data was entered to the computer and analyzed by SPSS Version-21.0. The questionnaire sheet comprising of 2 sections, demographics of study participant section, and perception of internship nursing students regarding the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes and ranked according to the order of importance. The descriptive statistics for instance, frequencies, mean, percentages, and standard deviation for each item were to be calculated. For the correlation among each item for each section were be calculated.

RESULT

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents (n=80)

S. No	Variables	Frequency n	Percentage %
1	Gender		
	• Male	72	90
	• Female	8	10
2	Age		
	• 18-22 years	48	60.2
	• 23-27 years	25	32.0
	• 28-32 years	7	7.8
	• 33 years and above		0
3	Marital Status		
	• Married	77	96
	• Unmarried	3	04
4	Qualification		
	• Bachelor degree in nursing	80	100
	• Diploma Nursing		0
5	CGPA		
	• 1.5-2.5	4	05
	• 2.5-3.5	68	85
	• <- 4	8	10

The aim of this study is to assess the perception of internship nursing students about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes at private sector hospital. The nursing students who had finished their internship were included to collect data about preceptor role. The results of demographic characteristics were prepared by using descriptive statistics. The demographics of participants in Table 1 consisted on nursing students gender, age, marital status, qualification and GPA. Ninety percent (n = 90) of the study respondents were female as government sector has recruited more female

than the male students in Pakistan. Majority participants (60%) belong to age brackets 18–22 years, while some of them 32% reported between 23-27 years while remaining (08 %) in the age brackets of 28 to 32 years. All 100 % study participants had Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Majority of the internship nursing students were unmarried (96%) while only 04 % were married. The data of nursing internship students showed that 5% fall in the range of 1.5-2.5 GPA while majority (84.7%) have GPA between 2.5-3.5. Rest of the internship students (10%) having GPA near to 4.

Table 2: Perception of nursing internship students regarding preceptor role on achieving learning outcome

S. No	Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
1	Integrate theoretical knowledge and concepts related to nursing, basic, and social sciences into nursing practice.	37.0	40.1	15.6	2.9	4.4
2	Recognize the knowledge and theory foundation related to core nursing interventions and skills	29.4	50.6	12.2	4.4	3.4
3	Evaluate patients' health conditions in a systematic manner within standards of professional practice	42.0	30.3	15.6	6.5	5.6
4	Plan holistic patient and family centered care utilizing the nursing process framework	27.4	38.3	20.0	5.7	8.6
5	Evaluate research evidence necessary to guide professional nursing practice	17.0	47.1	31.6	1.4	2.9

6	Demonstrate utilization of critical thinking skills in making informed decisions related to the care of patients	26.1	50.0	17.1	4.3	2.5
7	Recognize the structure of the practice settings and its available services needed to facilitate patient care delivery	34.4	35.0	7.6	5.1	17.9
8	Conduct self professionally	33.1	38.1	13.5	5.7	9.6
9	Assume responsibility and accountability for own decisions and actions	41.5	44.3	10.0	4.2	0
10	Work effectively with interdisciplinary team in order to meet the healthcare needs of patients and their families.	40.7	42.1	5.7	5.0	6.4
11	Demonstrate effective time management skills	31.1	48.6	12.9	0	7.4
12	Incorporate professional values including ethical and legal aspects into the practice of nursing.	28.1	53.3	17.1	1.5	0
13	Demonstrate basic clinical leadership skills.	33.4	54.3	8.4	2.9	0
14	Explore available career pathways within nursing most suitable for future employment.	30.3	24.3	24.3	5.4	15.7
15	Recognize an informed career decision	42.1	20.0	28.6	5.4	3.9

16	Advocate human dignity and patients families' rights	31.4	40.6	17.1	6.5	4.4
17	Provide health education for patients families/caregivers	34.3	40.0	8.6	1.4	15.7
18	Demonstrate mastery of basic mathematical calculation necessary for nursing care delivery	30.1	37.1	15.1	5.4	12.3
19	Utilize nursing informatics and technology in reviewing, reporting and documenting day to day patient care.	37.0	35.0	10.7	7.4	9.9
20	Communicate effectively verbally and non- verbal with patients, families, interdisciplinary team	42.7	32.9	10.0	7.1	7.3
21	Document nursing care plan and interventions effectively using legal and professional documentation	32.1	30.0	25.6	7.4	4.9
22	Perform comprehensive physical assessment for individuals across life span	40.0	25.7	12.9	20.0	1.4
23	Perform nursing skills stipulated in the Internship curriculum within satisfactory performance level	41.5	30.8	14.9	5.7	7.1
24	Carry an assigned patient load and deliver holistic nursing care within	37.1	45.7	14.3	2.9	0.0

	standards of practice guidelines						
25	Perform progressive development of clinical skills	35.7	40.2	17.6	1.1	5.4	
26	Carry out nursing care needs of a full patient load	30.7	42.1	10.3	10.0	6.9	
27	Demonstrate effectively all required clinical competencies	31.4	51.4	10.0	7.2	0	

Key: 5= Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3= Neutral 2= Dis-agree 1= Strongly Disagree

Perception is the way of thinking of nursing internship students towards the role of preceptor in the achievement of learning outcome. The responses of the nursing student internship were categorized on a 5-point Likert scale with 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral) 2 (dis disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree). The table 2 depicted the percentage of nursing internship students about the role of preceptor in achieving learning outcomes at clinical setting.

Majority of the study participant's responses fall in the range of 70 to 80 percent indicating strongly agree or agree response with the role of preceptor in attaining the nursing students learning outcomes during internship period for the better quality care provision. Nursing students showed agreement (82.8%) with the statement "Work effectively with interdisciplinary team in order to meet the healthcare needs of patients and their families". This efficient collaboration of preceptor enables the internship students to meet their learning objectives and provide care in efficient way to the patients and the community as a whole. Moreover, majority of the nurses (85%) showed positive response to "Assume responsibility and accountability for own decisions and actions" 87.6 percent related to the statement of "Demonstrate basic clinical leadership skills'.

Furthermore, majority internship student nurses are strongly agreeing that clinical preceptors have professional conduct (71.2), integrate professional values related to ethics and legality into the nursing practice (81.3%), exhibit effective time management and leadership skills at clinical site (79.7%), implement progressive development of clinical skills (75.9%) and demonstrate all required clinical competencies effectively

(82.8%). On the other hand, only a minor percent of the nursing internship 5 to 7 percent strongly disagreed with the usefulness of the preceptor role in attaining the learning outcomes of the internship nursing students at clinical site regarding efficient in an interdisciplinary team, effective time management skills, incorporate professional values of ethical and legal aspects into the practice of nursing, whereas none of them strongly disagreed about the role of preceptor to help the nursing students to take responsibility and accountability for own decisions and exhibit fundamental clinical management skills, and effectively demonstrate clinical competencies required at clinical site.

However, some of the nursing internship students were natural to the questionnaire items about the role of preceptor in achieving learning outcomes. Nursing students showed neutral response to the statements “assess research evidence necessary to guide professional nursing practice” (31.6%), “explore available career pathways within nursing most suitable for future employment” (24.3%), “recognize an informed career decision” (28.6%), and “document nursing care plan and interventions effectively using legal and professional documentation” (25.6%) respectively. In addition to this, about less than fourth study participants showed neutral response, 25.6 percent, 12.9 percent, 17.1 percent regarding, document nursing care plan and interventions effectively following standards of legal and professional documentation, perform comprehensive physical assessment for individuals across life span, and incorporate professional values including ethical and legal aspects into the practice of nursing, respectively. Moreover, only a small (10.0%) percent of the nursing students’ participants were neutral about assuming the responsibility and accountability for own decisions and actions, and demonstrate basic clinical leadership skills.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study is to examine perception of internship nursing students about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes at private sector hospital. With huge cooperation of the student nurses who had completed their internship period successfully in the delivery and completion of questionnaire, the 100 % response rate was achieved in this study. There is only one main variable of the study which is perception of nursing students about preceptor role in achieving the learning outcome. The perception is the way of thinking of nursing internship students towards the role of

preceptor in the achievement of learning outcome. The responses of the nursing student internship were categorized on a 5-point Likert scale.

The findings of the present study illustrate that majority of internship nursing students have positive perception towards the role of preceptor in achieving the learning outcomes at private sector hospital with 80 participants included in the present study. The internship period is a requisite year for the training of newly graduates to fill the gap between theory and practice. It is a period during which student nurses apply their concepts learned in the classroom for the betterment of the patients at clinical setting. Internship period provide opportunity to the nursing students to enhance their skills and use their knowledge in various clinical procedures and practices. It is a transitional period during which the clinical skills of nursing student refined and professionally became mature enough to accomplish the role and responsibilities must require for becoming a licensure nurse.

Majority participants (92%) belong to age brackets 18–27 years which is similar to findings given by one of the previous research (Al-Mahmoud et al. 2013). The result findings of present study demonstrated that majority of the study participant's indicating strongly agree or agree response with the role of preceptor in attaining the nursing students learning outcomes during internship period for the better quality care provision. The results of present study are consistent with the findings given by Ellemes et al. (2017) who stated that role of clinical preceptors is to assist internship nursing students to accomplish the clinical objectives through expertise, effective clinical practice and create a conducive learning environment for smooth and effective learning about quality care provision. Similarly, the finding of one prior research is supporting the present study findings through learning outcomes center on the framework and prospective applications of acquired knowledge and skills, help them to connect learning in various contexts and help in assessment and evaluation processes (Atakro and Gross 2016).

Nursing students showed agreement (82.8%) with the statement “Work effectively with interdisciplinary team in order to meet the healthcare needs of patients and their families”. This efficient collaboration of preceptor enables the internship students to meet their learning objectives and provide care in efficient way to the patients and the community as a whole. Moreover, majority of the nurses (85%) showed positive

response to “Assume responsibility and accountability for own decisions and actions” 87.6 percent related to the statement of “Demonstrate basic clinical leadership skills’.

These findings are supported by various previous researches that are in line with the said findings and reported about the role of preceptors in enhancing the morale, confidence, and enabling the internship students to recognize their professional identity and meet their need to fulfil the learning objectives during their transition period (Dimitriadou et al. 2015; Christiansen et al. 2014). Likewise, the findings of Bvumbwe (2016) study showed that internship or training organisations with clinical settings enhance the internship nursing student’s skills and confidence that lead to achieve learning outcomes more efficiently and effectively.

Furthermore, majority internship student nurses are strongly agreeing that clinical preceptors have professional conduct (71.2) and help the nursing students to behave professionally in all the matters related to quality care provision and interdisciplinary team collaboration. A study conducted in 2014 supported the result of present study professional approach by the findings of the clinical preceptors recognize and integrate the theoretical concepts related to core nursing interventions and skills to nursing practice. The nurse as a preceptor facilitate the learning of the student nurses professionally at clinical setting through hands on practice on real patients. The preceptor must direct the internship students and teach them different practical skills to enhance their expertise, morale and confidence (Leslee 2014).

The findings of our study shown that the majority of the study respondents perceived the clinical preceptors are helpful with regards to undertake responsibility and accountability for own decisions and actions, work with interdisciplinary team in effective way to meet the needs of healthcare of patients and their siblings, progressive development and performance of clinical skills, professional code of conduct, use of efficient time management skills, and clinical leadership skills, and exhibit clinical competencies effectively in all areas.

The results of present study are consistent with the findings given by Ellemes et al. (2017) whose report depicted that the internship nursing students stated that clinical preceptors were prestigious and honourable with regards to the learning facilitation through guidance, conducive environment, and support during hand on practical procedure and efficient communication with interdisciplinary r health care personnel. The finding of another study supported the present study findings by showing that

Preceptor teach the internship students to work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams to fulfill the health related needs of patients and families. Furthermore, role of preceptor is to assist the interns to develop psychomotor skills for the achievement of learning outcomes devised by their parent institutes (Jokelainen et al. 2011).

Furthermore, the findings of present study depicted that most of the study respondents agreed that clinical preceptors were supportive to incorporate theoretical knowledge and concepts related to nursing, basics, and social sciences into nursing practice, demonstrate utilisation of critical thinking skills in making informed decisions related to the care of patients, and demonstrate effectively all required clinical competencies, which is supported by other researcher findings that clinical preceptor help the internship students by providing different skills related to their successful clinical practice and enhanced their learning by clinical demonstration of various nursing procedures on real patients. This will help the novel nurses to move into advanced learner stage and enable them to exhibit proficient clinical skills in real situations especially in critical care units (Al-Mahmoud et al. 2013).

Additionally, clinical learning is the process of acquisition of essential skills for the quality care provision to patients at clinical setting. It is an effective way of learning during which new student nurses equipped to achieve clinical competence in performing different practices (Kaphagawani and Useh 2013). In all nursing colleges, pre service training sessions are essential for the application of theoretical knowledge into practice. At clinical setting the concept of preceptorship is not new and essential for application of theory into practice by novel nursing student. The role of preceptor is to guide the clinical students at every step to perform the clinical procedures with competency (Hall 2016).

Furthermore, the findings of previous study depicted that demonstration of nursing skills as required by their curriculum related to internship with the help of preceptor. The interns became vigilant in assigning the work load and provision of holistic nursing care according to standard guidelines during internship period. They demonstrate the clinical competencies effectively with the help of clinical preceptors (Al-Mamari et al., 2014)

The respondents of our study agreed about the effectiveness of preceptor's role with respect to communicating effectively verbally and non-verbally with patients, families, and interdisciplinary team. This finding is supported by the findings of various studies

that showed the clinical preceptors enable the internship nursing students to use verbal and nonverbal clues for effective therapeutic communication with interdisciplinary teams and patients as well. At clinical placement, the important task is to maintain the record and documentation of essential nursing intervention and nursing care plans effectively for evidences at legal and professional level. Clinical preceptors help the interns to perform physical assessment comprehensively for better diagnosis of patient health problem (Al-Mamari, Al-Nasseri, & Al-Maskari, 2014; Bradshaw, Tighe, & Doody, 2018; Carver & Lazarsfeld-Jensen, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Nurses are frontline health care providers in health care system to enhance the quality of patient care. The role of preceptor or mentor is very important for the successful provision of quality care which help the students to become a competent clinical nurse. The findings of this study play significant role to understand the perception of internship nursing about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes during their daily routine activities. Overall, the present study findings propose that participated internship nursing students held a positive perception towards preceptor role in achieving learning outcome at clinical site for the better provision of quality care services. The findings of present study depict that student nurses during internship perceived the role of preceptor as valuable asset for learning at clinical site that improve the competencies to perform different practical procedures in professional way and minimize the gap between theory and practice. The clinical preceptors enable the internship nursing students to use verbal and nonverbal clues for effective therapeutic communication with interdisciplinary teams and patients as well. At clinical placement, the important task is to maintain the record and documentation of essential nursing intervention and nursing care plans effectively for evidences at legal and professional level. Clinical preceptors help the interns to perform physical assessment comprehensively for better diagnosis of patient health problem.

STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

- This study utilized a reliable and validated tool to measure the perception of internship nursing students about the preceptor role in achieving learning outcomes
- Self-administered questionnaire is considered as convenient method of data collection.

- This study has small number of study respondents that was good from statistical point of view. This cannot affect the result generalization

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- There is a small sample size so next study need to be conducted with a larger sample
- Only quantitative methods were used for data collection so qualitative approach would be used to achieve the richness of data
- The role of preceptor is just limited to internship nursing students so further studies regarding the role of preceptor on patient outcomes would be required.

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